3. The Government has rationalised the excise and custom duties for food processing items.

4. Automatic approval for foreign equity upto 51% is available for most of the processed food items.

The Ministry provides financial assistance under its plan schemes, in the form of loan or grant-in-aid to industry, non-Governmental Organisation, Cooperatives, Research & Development Institutions and Human Resource Development Centres. The thrust areas of the plan assistance are:

1. Establishment of post harvest infrastructure including cold chain infrastructure.

2. Establishment of Food Processing Industrial Estates/Parks.

3. Settingg up/expansion/modernisation of food processing Industries.

4. Research & Development on food processing.

5. Human Resource Development in the food processing sector.

6. For conducting studies, Seminars, Workshops and exhibitions etc.

7. Establishment of Quality Control Facilities.

Plan schemes of the Ministry are project oriented and not State specific.

(c) and (d) Since liberalisation in July, 2.991 till December 1998, investment of Rs. 72,175 crores has been approved for setting up of Food processing industries in the country. Out of this, foreign investment component is Rs. 8,809 crores. As Food Processing Industries are both in the organised and unorganised sectors, information regarding the number of food processing units set up State-wise is not centrally maintained.

Restoring for revision of casual assignees in AIR

2280. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question No. 104 given in the Rajya Sabha on 23rd February, 1999 and state:

(a) the details of the financial constraints which forced keeping in abeyance the revision of the fee of casual assignees;

(b) the details of the relaltionship of abeyance with the purpose of attracting better talent and with the change in cost of living since January, 1999;

(c) the reasons for lack of proper planning and financial foresight; and

(d) by what time Government plan to restore the revision and to pay the arrears thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MUKHTAR NAQVI): (a) The increased fee involves an approximate expenditure of Rupees Fifteen Crores per annum.

(b) Abeyance of revised fee structure is unlikely to have adverse effect as casual assignees who stand to benefit have been associated with its programmes for some time.

(c) There has been an over all cut in allocation of budgetted funds.

(d) It is not possible to indicate any definite time frame for application of new fee structure.

Removal of "AAJ TAK" from Doordarshan

2281. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BRAODCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to remove "Aaj